

But instead we must look forward, with urgency, not to my life, but to the lives of the people of Northern Ireland.

The events of the past year have shown the great promise of peace. But they also have shown that huge obstacles remain to a durable and sustainable peace. On Good Friday of last year, the political leaders of Northern Ireland showed the world the meaning of political courage. Many of these leaders are present, and I'd like to recognize some of them: David Trimble, John Hume, Seamus Mallon, Reg Empey, Gerry Adams, John Alderdice, Sean Neeson, David Ervine, Monica McWilliams and Gary McMichael.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are the heroes of the Northern Ireland Peace process. These are the men and women who deserve the medals and the applause. They are my friends, and yours. Please join me in letting them know how much you value their Good Friday agreement.

I'd like to address those leaders directly. You've heard the applause. Perhaps better than anyone, I know how well deserved it was. But even before the applause fades, the future intrudes.

Getting the agreement was historic. But, as you know, by itself it doesn't provide or guarantee peace. It makes peace possible. Whether it will be realized is up to you.

The Good Friday Agreement transformed Northern Ireland. It also transformed you. You are no longer just the leaders of your parties, or members of the assembly. You are the vessels into which the people of Northern Ireland have poured their hopes and dreams. You sought public office and with it comes power and responsibility. You have the awesome responsibility of life or death. What you do, or don't do, could mean life or death for many of your fellow citizens.

As he left London to join us at the talks last April, Tony Blair said he felt the hand of history on his shoulder. It's still there, on your shoulders.

For a moment, come back in time with me to December 16, 1997, the last negotiating session of that year. We met in the small conference room at Stormont. We had tried for two intense weeks to get agreement on a statement of the key issues to be resolved, and we had failed. We were all bitterly frustrated and deeply discouraged.

As we walked out into the windswept and rainy night, it seemed so hopeless, so impossible. And yet, less than four months later, you reached agreement.

How did you do it? You did it because each of you took a risk for peace, each of you acted with wisdom and courage. And you did it because you knew, in your hearts, that the alternative was unacceptable.

It stills is. The alternative to peace in Northern Ireland is unacceptable. It should be unspeakable, unthinkable. The continued punishment beatings and the savage murder of Rosemary Nelson, who on Sunday was blown to death just a few yards from her eight year old daughter's school, are like alarm bells ringing in the night. They warn that the cancer of violence and sectarian hatred lurks just below the surface and could erupt at any time into wide-spread conflict.

History might have forgiven failure to reach an agreement, since no one thought it possible. But once the agreement was reached, history will never forgive the failure to carry it out. The people of Northern Ireland don't want to slip back into the cauldron of sectarian conflict. You can prevent it.

Those who oppose the agreement have failed to bring it down. As Seamus Mallon has said, the only people who can bring the Good Friday down are those who supported it. You cannot let that happen.

I know you. I trust you. I believe in you. And I say to you that the problems you now

face are no greater or more difficult than those you faced, and dealt with, last year. You must once more rise above adversity. You must again defy history.

You must come together, now and as often as necessary until peace is assured. Then you will deserve and receive the honor that will transcend all others: the satisfaction of knowing that, in the most difficult and dangerous of circumstances, you have bestowed on your countrymen the ultimate prize peace and reconciliation.

After you reached agreement on Good Friday, we were exhausted, elated, and emotional. I conclude tonight by repeating what I told some of you then.

The agreement was for me the realization of a dream that had sustained me for three-and-a-half years. Now, I have a new dream. In a few years, I will take my young son to Northern Ireland. We will roam the country, taking in the sights and sounds of one of the most beautiful landscapes on earth, feeling the warmth and generosity of a great people. Then, on a rainy afternoon, we will go to the Northern Ireland Assembly. We will sit quietly in the visitors' gallery and watch and listen as you debate the ordinary issues of life in a democratic society: education, health care, agriculture, tourism. There will be no talk of war, for the war will have long been over. There will be no talk of peace, for peace will be taken for granted.

On that day, the day on which peace is taken for granted in Northern Ireland, I will be truly and finally fulfilled.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant called the roll.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business. The Senator is granted 10 minutes.

Mr. BAUCUS. I thank the Chair.

FEDERALLY IMPACTED SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak to the Federally Impacted School Improvement Act.

As we all know, there is a very important debate going on in our country today concerning our Nation's schools. Schools all across our country are crumbling, in many cases in such disrepair that it affects the child's ability to learn or even feel safe. I hope and expect that this Congress will reach a consensus on a school construction bill very soon.

I support and have cosponsored several bills in the last Congress that encourage a nationwide effort to rebuild our public schools. Quite simply, it is the right thing to do.

But in a heated national debate, one group of children is continually left out in the cold; that is, students who live on federally owned land, usually an Indian reservation, very often a military installation. In my State of Montana, about 12,000 children are

classified as federally impacted; that is, they live on Federal land.

For almost 50 years, Congress has provided financial assistance to school districts that are impacted by a Federal presence. We call this Impact Aid funding. Unfortunately, it has been underfunded for the last 15 years. And even worse, for the last 5 years Impact Aid schools have received zero dollars to help in paying for badly needed repairs and construction.

This has created an underclass of schools with glaring infrastructure problems that border on dangerous and inhumane.

How bad is it, you may ask? Let me tell you.

In one school in Montana, the Hays Lodge Pole Elementary School on the Fort Belknap Reservation, they say that the high school has infrastructure problems that are so bad that saying it has problems is like saying that the Titanic had a small leak.

Whenever it rains or snows, the roof leaks making classrooms unusable. The kindergarten is located on a stage, not in a classroom. The school nurse and counselor work out of a converted locker room shower with no ventilation. The decrepit sewage system regularly backs up into this same shower, filling the nurse's and counselor's office with raw sewage. And all special education services, which a large percentage of students use, are provided in a separate house requiring the children or staff to walk over an ice rink in high winds and adverse weather just to get to class.

While some may say, OK, that sounds like a bad deal, shouldn't the local taxpayers pass a mill levy to build a new school? Or shouldn't they get help from the President's school construction bill which gives billions of dollars in bonding authority to school districts for just these sorts of problems? The answer, sadly, is no.

The problem is that these schools have no bonding authority. Since the land is owned by the Federal Government, there is no local mill levy to raise. And since the Federal Government has, for 5 consecutive years, provided zero dollars for repairing Impact Aid schools, these problems have just gotten worse and more expensive. And it is our children who pay the price.

So the Baucus-Hagel Federal Impacted School Improvement Act aims to fix that. Make no mistake, this is not some budget-busting Government handout. The act authorizes a small but meaningful \$50 million a year appropriation for the next 5 years for Impact Aid school construction and repair.

And 45 percent of the funds appropriated under the bill go to Indian lands. Another 45 percent is dedicated to military schools. The final 10 percent is reserved for emergency situations.

In order to make this small appropriation go further, our bill requires local school districts to match every

Federal dollar except for the 10 percent reserved for true emergencies. The act also limits to \$3 million the amount an individual school district can receive in any 5-year period. This is done to ensure that all—or at least more—impacted schools will have the opportunity to use these grants to improve the lives of their children.

Mr. President, this bill is vital to a vast number of children in Montana, Nebraska, and all across our country. I am hopeful that a comprehensive school construction bill can pass this Congress. But let me tell the Senate today, Senator HAGEL and I plan to make sure that any school construction bill that passes this Senate will also take care of federally impacted school districts.

We hope to pass this bill regardless of the larger debate. But if that does not happen, we will also work to include this act in a broader school construction bill.

In closing, I want to reiterate that the children who attend schools on Indian lands or military installations are all of our children. We must not ignore them or allow their schools to fall into dangerous disrepair. They deserve the same education as every other child. Let us take this opportunity to redress our negligence in ignoring these children, and show them that we care. Let's pass this bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMERICA'S FAMILY FARMERS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I know there has been discussion about the agenda here in the Senate, what the Senate will take up, what it will consider, what it will debate in the coming days and weeks and months. I hear very little discussion about the need to respond to the farm crisis in the rural parts of our country.

I have, on half dozen occasions now, brought to the floor of the Senate a chart that shows our entire country with those counties blocked out in red that are losing population. What it shows is a large part of the middle of our country is being depopulated. We have a serious and abiding farm crisis. That depopulation in the middle part of America stems in large part from a farm economy that means family farmers are not making a living and all too often are having to leave the farm.

We keep hearing that it is a global economy. If it is a global economy, then why on earth do we have so many people hungry in the rest of the world? We are told 500 to 600 million people go to bed with an ache in their belly every

night because they did not have enough to eat. Then in the same global economy, with so many hungry people, a farmer somewhere in Cando, ND, or Regent, ND, today loads up a truckload of wheat and takes it to the county elevator and is told that the food has no value. That is not a global economy that seems to work, in my judgment.

This chart shows what is happening in the heartland of our country. Most of it is because of the urgency of the economic crisis facing family farmers. These red counties are the counties which have lost more than 10 percent of their population. Many of them have lost far more. My home county [Hettinger] is right up in here. It has lost almost half of its population in the last 25 years.

The middle part of America is being depopulated. We have a farm program that doesn't work. We have natural disasters that affect these family farmers. We have crop diseases. A GAO study I just released last week shows that in North Dakota a crop disease called scab or vomitoxin has cost our farmers \$200 million a year in lost income. They say 750 farmers have lost their farms because of just that one crop disease, the worst crop disease in a century in my home State.

Natural disasters, crop diseases; how about trade? How about telling our family farmers to compete in the global economy with the Europeans subsidizing their farmers in multiples of what we are while we try to help our farmers open foreign markets. You compete in the international marketplace with one hand tied behind your back. Or how about international trade that says, why don't we have the Canadians dump tens of thousands of semi-truckloads of their grain, their durum wheat and their spring wheat into our marketplace in conditions of unfair trade, driving down our prices. That is all right, and we will sit by and do nothing about it.

That is not a fair circumstance for our farmers. Japan, China; how many in this Chamber know that currently the tariff on American beef going into Japan is 45 percent, a 45-percent tariff? If we imposed that on anybody, we would be considered a massive failure. China says maybe they will decrease their tariff on American beef going into China. It is now 42.5 percent.

Our farmers deserve better trade policies than they are getting from this Government of ours. Our Government cannot do much about natural disasters except respond to them with a helping hand at a time when people need help. It can do something about trade policy that is unfair to our producers. And certainly, this administration and this Congress, especially this Congress, ought to do something about a farm bill that shortchanges American farmers.

The current farm bill we have is a wonderful bill if you are Cargill or Continental or some large grain trading company. If you are one of the behe-

moths, one of the giant agrifactories in America, you have to like the current circumstance. You have low prices at which you can buy the grain. Then you can put it in your plant, apply some air to it, and you can puff it up. Now you can call it puffed wheat and put it on the grocery store shelf. And while you are paying less for the grain, you can increase your prices. That is exactly what is happening, and that is exactly what was announced last week.

Grain prices for family farmers are collapsed. Cereal manufacturers are saying, we want to increase cereal prices 2.5 percent. You talk about a disconnection. You talk about short-circuiting the economic system. That is a short-circuit.

The question for this Congress is, Do we care? I do. Do enough others care to want to save family farmers? Or is America's food production destined to go to the giant agrifactories that farm America from California to Maine with nary a person in sight—no farm lights, no yard lights out there illuminating where a family lives and does its work—because there won't be families on the farm?

Or does this country, does this Congress, as many other countries, believe that a broad network of family producers on America's farms and ranches represents the best economic system? Do we believe in the Jeffersonian model that Thomas Jefferson talked about: That which keeps America free is broad-based economic ownership, because economic freedom relates to political freedom?

Do we really believe in broad-based economic ownership? If so, let's start to manifest that belief in farm policy. Let's decide that current farm policy is a bankrupt policy. The bill that was passed, the current farm bill that was passed that pulls the rug out from under family farmers says, when prices collapsed, do not bank on us for help—when that bill was passed, without my vote in this Congress, there was feasting and rejoicing and celebrating here in this town by the largest agribusinesses because they thought they had just won the lottery. What a wonderful deal for them.

Someday we will have lower grain prices, they thought, and we will buy this grain from family farmers cheap, and then eventually the family farmers will be gone. They will take over the farms and farm all of our country. They will put that grain in plants and will make substantial money off of it. That is exactly what happened at the expense of family farmers.

The question before this Congress is: Are we going to have the will to do what is necessary to repair the hole in the safety net for family farmers? Do we care whether there are family farmers left in our country?

Wheat prices have fallen 53 percent. Let me show a chart which demonstrates what has happened to wheat prices. I ask any American, I ask any Member of the Senate, how would you